

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ARTICLE II. PLANNING COMMISSION¹

Sec. 33-22. General Powers and Duties.

(a) The commission shall have the power and it shall be its duty:

(1) To adopt a comprehensive plan in conformance with the provisions of the Texas Local Government Code, section 211.004, and as defined herein, and recommend it to city council for its approval.

ARTICLE III. COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Sec. 33-51. Findings.

The city council finds and declares that:

- (1) The continued growth and development of the city will require the establishment of a comprehensive planning process to guide the future development and redevelopment of the city.
- (2) The creation of a comprehensive planning process will allow the city to establish a continuing process of defining the city's needs, establishing goals to meet those needs and the development of public policies and programs to meet those goals.
- (3) The comprehensive planning process will establish a system for all the city's diverse ethnic and cultural communities to participate in the identification of the city's needs, and the establishment of goals and policies to promote quality growth, protection of the environment, community livability, revitalization and economic development.
- (4) The comprehensive planning process will provide a means for enhancement and protection of aesthetic qualities of the city including design of civic structures, streets and public spaces, planning for preservation and development of bayous as aesthetic and recreation resources, preservation of historic places, encouragement of landscaping and reduction of visual blight.
- (5) The comprehensive planning process will provide a means for county-wide and regional governmental entities to coordinate with the city the planning and implementation of improvement programs for infrastructure, mobility, land use, environmental quality, and social and governmental service programs in a more efficient, systematic, and cost-effective manner.
- (6) The comprehensive planning process will provide an open, inclusive public policy-making process that will eliminate exclusion based upon race, color, creed or national origin.
- (7) In order to accommodate, facilitate and encourage desirable growth and development, the comprehensive plan will analyze the city's existing and potential growth and development, evaluate desirable patterns and directions of growth and development and utilize such information as a foundation for capital improvements, transportation, utilities and community services planning.
- (8) The comprehensive plan's encouragement of private growth and development coordinated with public investment and services can substantially and materially increase the efficiency of government.
- (9) In addition to guiding public investment and services, other implementation measures shall be used to enforce components of the comprehensive plan as adopted.
- (10) The planning commission, in the development of a comprehensive plan, should:
 - a. Provide protection for the city's residential neighborhoods by:
 1. Prohibiting future incompatible uses;
 2. Providing for amortization or "grandfathering" of existing non-conforming uses;

¹ This is an edit of the City's ordinance by the Gulf Coast Institute that removes all references to zoning. Otherwise, it is precisely as passed by Council.

3. Utilizing performance standards and use limitations within residential and adjoining neighborhoods; and
 4. Eliminating nuisances, as defined by law.
- b. Complement existing deed restrictions for residential areas.
 - c. Allow landowners to use their land as desired but with consideration for its impact on neighboring areas and in conformity with the city's comprehensive plan.
 - d. Provide a process which will encourage the involvement of residents and property owners in the determination of land use in their area.
 - e. Provide for the reasonable notice to property owners and residents of any proposed changes in the comprehensive plan, or variances in their neighborhood, and an opportunity for participation in the process.
 - f. Provide for clear, simple, fair, and apolitical administration, establishing and maintaining streamlined procedures for the review and approval of development applications, with clearly stated time frames for processing and acting upon permit applications, and minimizing potential adverse effects on the costs of development. Ordinances should be structured so that permit applications that comply with planning regulations and land use regulations will be entitled to expeditious approval.
 - g. Recommend an adequate level of city staff supported by an adequate budget to administer the planning process.
 - h. Provide procedures and policies that will not adversely affect the supply of affordable housing.
 - i. Promote a vital and vibrant central business district as denned in chapter 42 of this Code and promote the revitalization of the inner city.
 - k. Promote development quality and flexibility by designating, subject to council approval, districts for special purposes such as, but not limited to, planned development districts, urban villages and special districts for theatres, museums, historic preservation and scenic areas.
- (11) The city council is authorized to adopt a comprehensive plan under the provisions of Chapters 211 and 212 of the Local Government Code to guide its regulation of future development and redevelopment.
 - (12) The city council wishes to receive from the planning commission specific reports and recommendations on the most expeditious, efficient and advantageous way to create, implement and maintain a comprehensive plan unique to Houston's needs and other reasonable implementation measures for the city.

Sec. 33-52. Initial duties and responsibilities with regard to comprehensive planning of the planning commission.

The commission shall perform the following duties as specifically provided below or as soon as reasonably possible:

- (1)The commission shall present to council for its approval a plan offering initiatives that can, within six months from XXXX, materially support the maintenance of neighborhood integrity. The plan should include staff and funding requirements.
- (2)On or before six months from XXXX, the commission will submit to council for its approval a work plan for each of the elements of a comprehensive plan. Each work plan will be submitted to council as completed and will provide:
 - a. If appropriate, a prioritized list of tasks integral to each element and an analysis of task dependency to determine task sequence.
 - b. A suggested period of time appropriate to complete the element and each task necessary for its completion.
 - c. An estimate of staff requirements to complete each element.

- d. The estimated cost to the city to complete each element (if outside consultants are recommended an estimate of cost should be included).
- (3) Pursuant to work plans as approved by council, the commission shall begin preparing the comprehensive plan. The elements of a comprehensive plan will include, but will not be limited to, the following:
- a. A draft statement of community goals for Houston's future.
 - b. A detailed database including land use, population characteristics, demographics, employment information, local and regional economic growth trends, the needs for public facilities and services, and a program for the maintenance of this database.
 - c. A long-range planning process that continuously establishes a statement of needs, goals and planning alternatives for the next 30 years, to be updated every five years and revised every 15 years.
 - d. A statement of urban growth policies for the city including, but not limited to, policies related to transportation, the environment, growth patterns, safety, health, education, public utilities, finances and services, the preservation of historic resources, and the improvement of deteriorated areas. The plan should consider growth over the next 30 years, and should include any possible alternative growth patterns that take into account such general concepts as land uses and transportation systems.
 - e. A transportation plan and a land use plan in conjunction with State of Texas, County of Harris and the metropolitan transit authority that complements the goals statement, the urban growth policies and other elements of the comprehensive plan.
 - f. An economic development policy that should be designed to promote economic vitality and balanced growth for the city and region.
 - g. A community facility policy that should describe existing facilities (police, fire, emergency service, special services, library, health facilities, etc.) and indicate the size and appropriate location of future facilities.
 - h. Policies for utilities and infrastructure that will describe existing facilities, program improvements and strategies for improvement to be provided commensurate with development. Infrastructure policies should address water, wastewater, stormwater, electric and gas utilities, flood facilities, solid waste, recycling, hazardous waste, communication and transportation facilities.
 - i. An environmental analysis which should include a description of existing resources and policies and strategies for conservation and enhancement of environmental quality contemplating the city adoption of coordinated policies and standards, consistent with those of other governmental agencies, applicable to the region,
 - j. Recommended ordinances, regulations, and other measures to implement the comprehensive plan.
- (5) Plans, policies, and recommendations developed pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, when complete, may be implemented before completion of the comprehensive plan in its entirety.